# ADDRESS

TO THE

# ELECTORS

OF

## *Great Britain,*

Occaſion'd by the REPORT of a late

*Secret Committee.*

BRITISH MUSEUM

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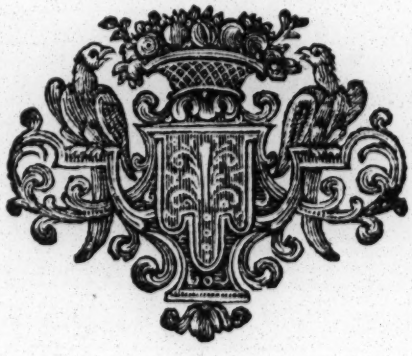

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BRITISH MUSEUM

*Addreſs'd to the Electors of* Great Britain, *occaſion'd by the farther Report of a late Committee of Secrecy.*

*Gentlemen,*

HOwever improper this Juncture may appear to ſome, for an Addreſs of this Kind, it is evident, that no Occaſion is ſo proper to remind the Electors of *Great Britain* of the Neceſſity of being watchful over their Rights, as when they are in Danger of having their Attention diverted, from their neareſt and moſt important Concerns at home, to the flattering Proſpect of Succeſs and Glory abroad. Dazling as this Proſpect is, it is certain, that no Juncture is ſo perilous to a free People, as when by breaking, or endeavouring to break a *Foreign*

*reign Yoke*, they give their Boſom Enemies an Opportunity of forging *Domeſtic Chains*. This was the Caſe with the *freeſt People, excepting ourſelves, that ever lived: Their Triumphs were glorious, but dearly did they pay for them: Had their Armies been leſs ſucceſsful Abroad, their Liberties had been more ſecure at Home: Nor is there in all the Hiſtory of their Republick, a ſingle Inſtance of a ſucceſsful Attempt to ſubvert their Conſtitution, but when it was made at the head of an Army, return'd with Glory, from ſubduing the Enemies of their Country. But let us look to later Times.

The Hiſtory of *Great Britain* differs widely in one Reſpect from that of all other Countries in *Europe*: Amongſt the latter, we find that Public Liberty was generally ſubverted by thoſe Princes who were moſt formidable *Abroad*; but in *Britain* the nobleſt Acquiſitions to the Liberties of the People, were gain'd under Princes who *were as ſucceſsful Abroad, as they were belov'd at Home*: But tho' this might in a great Meaſure be owing to the Perſonal Virtues of the Princes themſelves, yet it is certain, that had they been both deſigning and ambitious, the then Conſtitution of the Military Force muſt have prevented their Encroachments; becauſe all Encroachments upon the Liberties of the People at that Time *were the ſame* upon the Property

* *The* Romans.

perty of thoſe who compoſed the Army; and therefore the Army never could be brought to agree to them, or to underſtand any other *Duty*, beſides that which they ow'd to their Country. Their Caſe was different from that of our Neighbours, where their Princes finding the Means to introduce Mercenary Forces, created an *Intereſt* ſeparate from, and ſtronger than that of the Conſtitution.

As either the unavoidable Neceſſity of Junctures, the wicked Arts of Government, or a deſtructive Affectation of imitating our Neighbours, has made an almoſt total Alteration in this Reſpect; you are called upon by common Prudence, ariſing from the melancholy Experience of other Countries, and by the Duty you owe to yourſelves and Poſterity, to have more now than at other Times, a watchful Eye to the Preſervation of your Liberties; when there is an Appearance of a foreign *and a ſucceſsful War*. The Nation, in the laſt great War in which ſhe was engag'd againſt the ſame Enemy that *we* ſhall be probably engag'd againſt, amidſt all her great and glorious Succeſſes abroad, never loſt Sight of their Rights at home. Succeſs ſeems to have made them more than ordinarily jealous of them; and perhaps it was owing to this Jealouſy that a foreign War, gloriouſly car-

ried on by a mercenary Army, did not end in the Ruin of the Peoples Liberty.

You are now on the Eve of a War; but how different is the Juncture from that when the laſt War was undertaken! A Juncture, in which the contending Parties in the State were ſo equally ballanc'd, that neither of them could oppreſs the other; yet both were obliged to act, in Appearance at leaſt, for the common Good, and againſt the common Enemy. To this was owing the Preſervation of our Conſtitution, by which the preſent illuſtrious Royal Family ſits upon the Throne; and to this it is now owing that *you* have it yet in your Power to ſet your Rights beyond the Reach of all future Violation.

But how alter'd is your preſent Situation from what I have juſt mention'd? After a conſtant Oppoſition to the Meaſures of a wicked Miniſter for twenty Years, the Perſons whom you ſo nobly, and at laſt ſo ſucceſsfully ſeconded in that Oppoſition, are the firſt who ſucceeded to ſome of the late M——'s Power, to all his Places, and to a double Share of his Reproach. No ſooner had your Virtue put it in their Power to have eſtabliſh'd this Conſtitution, upon Principles which muſt have endur'd as long as the Senſe or Spirit of Liberty itſelf, than they ſhamefully *avow'd* to the World, that all the Oppoſition they made, was not for your

your *Rights*, but for their own *Ends*; they avow'd that all their Warmth was but affected; that the Laws they contended for, were never meant to paſs; that the Grievances they complain'd of, were never intended to be remov'd; that the Perſons they oppos'd, were never deſign'd to be puniſh'd; but that all thoſe were merely Pretences, the better to recommend themſelves to your Favour, till they had an Opportunity, in their own Perſons, of repeating the very ſame Conduct which they had ſo juſtly blam'd in others. That it may not be thought this is thrown out to inflame the Paſſions, or to awaken the Reſentment of the Public againſt its Governours, give me Leave to appeal to Facts: And firſt to this ſingle Conſideration, that tho' thoſe Apoſtate Patriots were in Power for upwards of four Months, during the Sitting of P———t, the Nation did not obtain one Law in Favour of Public Liberty, during all that time; tho' the fourth part of that Time, has been by Experience found ſufficient for concerting, and paſſing many Laws which may endanger it. You expected a Repeal of the Septennial Act, and that the time for the Continuance of the ſame Parliament ſhould be limited to three Years; and even in this you gave up ſome part of the Rights of the Conſtitution, which entitles you to annual Parliaments. I ſay, you expected this,

this, and your Expectations were encourag'd by the conſtant Profeſſions of thoſe who had juſt got into Power, and who, while out of Power, made this a favourable Topic of Declamation. But, how ſhamefully did they abuſe you? How directly contradictory were the Speeches of the ſame Men under the *Mask of Patriotiſm*, to what they uſe when in *Poſſeſſion of Power*? To what can this be owing? To Conviction? No, they laid aſide the Motion, not by a Debate, but a Diviſion: All the Conviction they had, was, that they were reſolved not to loſe their Places; what they cry'd out againſt as ſhameful and unconſtitutional under the late Miniſter, they defended and over-rul'd as right under themſelves. They laugh'd at the Arguments themſelves had us'd; and ſcoft at the Expectations and Calamities of their Country.

You expected a Place-Bill, which might have prevented the Courſe of Corruption, that Canker of this Conſtitution; but, tho' this was the Meaſure, upon which, to Appearance, the principal Streſs of the late Oppoſition was founded, yet the principal Advocates for it, when *out* of Place, became its principal Oppoſers when *in*. To what can this be owing? To the Inexpediency of the Thing? No, if it was Expedient in the Time of the late Oppoſition, it is equally Expedient now? The Expediency, or Fitneſs of Publick

Publick Meaſures, is never determin'd by any Conſideration of the Perſons of thoſe who are, or are not in Place. If thoſe Perſons do not deſerve the Truſt repoſed in them, it is proper they ſhould be limited and circumſcrib'd from abuſing it; if they do deſerve it, they never will oppoſe a Meaſure which may prevent the ſame Truſt from being abuſed, in Caſe their Succeſſors ſhall have leſs Virtue than themſelves. In a Free Government, the very Affection or Love for Power is a ſuſpicious Circumſtance; but a Love for a deſtructive Power never can enter into an honeſt Heart. Our Fore-fathers would have acted unworthy that glorious Character they have tranſmitted to their Poſterity, had they abſtain'd only from an undue Exerciſe of Power in their own Perſons; had they been tamely contented with the Poſſeſſon of Power themſelves, they muſt have left but little Liberty to their Succeſſors. But our late Patriots have ſo far diſregarded the Intereſts of Poſterity, that, by their Conduct, they have contributed all they could, to render it impracticable for a right *Place-Bill* from ever after taking Effect.

The next Diſappointment which your juſt and reaſonable Hopes met with, was in the Continuance of the numerous Penal Laws, which muſt have the moſt terrible Effect not only upon the *Liberties* and *Properties*, but upon the *Spirit* of a Free People. *Slavery* conſiſts

conſiſts in *Subjection* to Arbitrary Power; *Liberty*, in an *Independance* upon every Thing but the *Salutary Conſtitutional Laws of the Country*. The Penal Laws are confeſſedly contrary to the Genius of this Conſtitution; and, placing the Execution of them in the Hands of a Miniſtry, is againſt the *Spirit* of *Liberty* it ſelf. Nay they are equally deſtructive to the Rights of a Free People, whether they are *rigidly* or *gently* executed; for ſuppoſing them to be *gently* executed, yet ſtill the Laſh hangs over the Head of the Subject, who in ſuch a Situation never can be ſaid to be free; and it ſtill is in the Option of the Miniſtry to put them in Execution, in Caſe the Subject ſhall dare, contrary to his Dictates or Intereſts, to aſſert his own Rights, as an *Engliſhman*. Therefore, the late Patriots forfeited every Pretence to that noble Appellation, by their never ſo much as attempting a Repeal of any one of thoſe Laws againſt which they themſelves, for ſuch a Number of Years, had acted, ſpoke, and voted.

You expected, and juſtly too, that the Miſ-conduct of the Authors of all your Miſeries for theſe twenty Years paſt, of all the Contempt this Nation has fallen into, of all the ridiculous Expences ſhe has been at, and of all the Blood that ſhe has pour'd out to no Purpoſe, ſhould be enquired into, and puniſh'd. The Spirit, with which this

this was *demanded*, run too high, not to be in ſome Meaſure gratify'd; but it was gratify'd only in Part, and the ſubſequent Meaſures render'd the Events ariſing upon the Enquiry more affronting and provoking to the Nation, than if an Enquiry had never been mov'd for, or, if mov'd for, flatly deny'd. The Facts were clearly prov'd, the Criminal convicted to the Satisfaction of the whole Nation, and yet you were expreſsly told, that *you could have no Satisfaction.*

Had theſe Facts never been enquired into, and if enquired into, had the Proofs of them been but doubtful and dark, ſomewhat might have been ſaid in Favour of their Authors; ſomewhat might have been ſaid to mitigate the Cenſure of the Publick, againſt thoſe who ſcreen the Guilty: Nay, in ſome Senſe it had been happy for the Nation that no Enquiry had been ſet on Foot, becauſe had the Facts never been enquired into, the *Preſumption* muſt have ſtill remain'd that they were *puniſhable*; the Terror of an Enquiry muſt have ſtill hung over the Head of that Criminal, and all future ones, and might have been a Check upon their Miſconduct: But how does the Caſe ſtand at preſent?

All the Oppoſition which is poſſible to be made, was made to the Enquiry itſelf; at laſt it was carried by a very narrow Majority, and limited to that Period, within

which the leaſt guilty Tranſactions happen'd, and wherein they who had the deepeſt Hand in ſome of the moſt important Scenes of Iniquity muſt have appear'd in their proper Colours, without the Mask of Patriotiſm they had ſo long worn; and have been expoſed to the juſt, and merited Reſentment of the Publick.

However, when the Inquiry was made, and after with infinite Trouble, Fatigue, and Labour, a few of the many Miſteries of Iniquity that had happen'd within that Period were laid open, and nothing remain'd but to proceed to Judgment, a Veil is ſuddenly drawn over the whole; they who had before acted in the moſt publick Scenes of Oppoſition, withdraw behind the Curtain, the People are in effect told, that, let the Offences of a M——r be ever ſo deep, and his Crimes ever ſo complicated, his Perſon, his Intereſt, his Family, and his Eſtate, muſt be ever ſacred, and above the Reach of publick Juſtice. This, I ſay, was in effect, the Language which the Impunity of the late M——r ſpoke to the whole Nation, and implied an Indemnification to every one of his Succeſſors, who ſhall be found *ingenious enough to out-do him in Guilt.* So that you are to conſider in what a Condition your own Rights and thoſe of your Poſterity ſtand from this Implication.

Should

For ſhould the moſt neceſſary War for the Defence and Glory of *Great Britain* be for the future enter'd into by the Sovereign, ſeconded by the Hearts, the Hands, and the Purſes of the Subjects, a M——r may with Eaſe and Safety defeat the beſt laid Expedition: He may ſacrifice the moſt important Lives, and convert to his own Advantage or that of his Friends, Money earn'd by the Blood, the Sweat, and the Toil of the Soldier or Sailor, and all with a View to advance his own Intereſt.

He may ſtrike at the moſt fundamental Principles of your Liberties, at the Privileges of your Corporations and publick Bodies, Violations that have been puniſhed, *even in the Perſons of Kings themſelves*; He may apply to his own infamous Purpoſes, that publick Treaſure, for which you are daily labouring, and which your Repreſentatives have generouſly given for ſupporting the Dignity of your Civil Government. This Miſapplication may amount to greater Sums, than P———ts in former Times thought proper to entruſt to their Princes, even upon preſſing Emergencies. In ſhort, all the Abuſes which your Foreſathers ſo nobly and ſucceſsfully ſtruggled to prevent in Kings, may be repeated in M——rs; with this Difference, that Kings were often check'd, and ſometimes puniſhed; but a M——r from this Precedent is ſo far from

being under the Dread of Puniſhment, that he will think himſelf entitled to Rewards and Diſtinctions; nay, what is above all, to retire in his old Age, to that quiet Retreat which is the nobleſt Reward next to the Approbation of the publick Voice, that a Life ſpent in promoting the Good of the Publick can receive.

I ſhall now take the Liberty to ſpecify one Fact, and ſubmit it to your Conſideration, after premiſing a few Reflections that ſeem natutally to ſuggeſt.

Rewards and Puniſhments are juſtly eſteem'd the two Pillars of Government; and tho' the very Reverſe of one another in their own Nature, yet they equally operate to the ſame End; which is the *Safety of Society*. Nay, I am not ſure, whether the proper Diſtribution of Rewards and Puniſhments be not the greateſt Art in every Government, and the miſplacing of either, one of the greateſt Diſcouragements that Virtue can receive. This is not an Age where People are ſo romantically heroic, as to think that *Virtue is her own Reward*; no, an honeſt Man who ſerves his Country faithfully, has a Right to think himſelf intitled to thoſe Advantages, which otherwiſe fall to thoſe who leſs deſerve them; he has even a Right to complain if he is diſappointed; becauſe ſuch a Diſappointment can only proceed from ſome private mercenary View

of

of thoſe who have the Diſpoſal of publick Affairs.

But however conducive the proper Diſtribution of Rewards may be to right political OEconomy; that of Puniſhments is equally, if not more neceſſary. A Man may be honeſt tho' not rewarded, but a Rogue will never reclaim, if he is under no Dread of being puniſh'd. When wicked Meaſures meet with *Impunity*, it is the ſame as if they receiv'd a *Sanction*; ſuch Impunity throws down all the Fences with which the Laws of Nature and Nations, or the Wiſdom of our Anceſtors had guarded either publick Liberty or private Property; it expoſes both to the Inſults of the lawleſs and rapacious Invader; it ſinks the Condition of the free-born Subject to a Level with that of the meaneſt Slave, and creates Fetters for innocent, unborn Poſterity.

But how are thoſe Conſiderations ſtrong as they are aggravated, when the Abuſe of publick Power receives not only *Impunity*, but *Reward*. And the Indignation of every virtuous Man muſt ſwell to a ſtill farther Heighth, when this *Impunity* and thoſe *Rewards* attend every Species of oppreſſive Power from the Miniſter, who dictates in the Cabinet of his M——r, to the Fellow who Lords it in the Face of a Huſtings. Will Poſterity believe, that ſuch a Caſe has happen'd in this free Country, where *Jea-*

*louſy*

*louſy of Power* has ever been the nobleſt Characteriſtick of *Liberty*, and the puniſhing its Abuſe, the moſt ſalutary Effect of *Law*: Will it believe that the Favour of a C —t encircled with a Coronet, that Head which the Juſtice of a Nation demanded to a Block; and that the petty Offender who aim'd at one Blow to deſtroy the Rights of his Fellow Citizens, after being *puniſh'd* by the *Conſtitution*, was *rewarded* by the *Government*.

The Circumſtance I have here hinted at is, with Regard to *one L——r*, High B——ff of *W———r*, whom, after the Juſtice of Parliament cenſur'd for one of the moſt notorious Violations of Liberty that ever was heard of, the Gratitude of the M——r rewarded with a more than Miniſterial Profuſion. Were the Precedent which this Profuſion has ſet limited to Perſonal Conſideration, or a temporary Inconveniency, there might perhaps be ſome Room for an Imputation of *Ill-Nature* in taking this publick Notice of it; but we are to conſider, that the Service for which this 1500 *l.* was paid, had not even the Merit of *ſucceſsful Villany*; That it was the Reward of an *Attempt* to ſubvert the moſt valuable Privilege of *Engliſhmen*; that it was but like an Earneſt Penny of what he might have expected had he been ſucceſsful. Add to all this, that the Period both when this Act

was

was committed, and when it was puniſh'd, was ſo *critical*, that the Fate of *this Nation*, nay, the *Liberties of Europe*, depended upon the *Majority*, (ſmall as it was) which it was intended to create.

But let us conſider this Tranſaction in a more general Light. Every Commoner of *England* who comes into Parliament, tho' he is choſen by a particular County, or City, or Borough, *ſerveth for the whole Kingdom*. See *Cook*'s 4th Inſt. 14. From hence it follows, that every undue Election into Parliament is equally a Violation of the Rights of the whole Nation, with thoſe of the particular County or Corporation for which ſuch a Repreſentative is return'd. In the Caſe we are now conſidering, tho' the *Blow* was immediately aim'd at the City of *Weſtminſter*, yet the *Stroke* fell equally upon all the Nation. Every Commoner of *England* in Parliament ſits upon that *Great Jury* whoſe Votes regulates my Property as well as yours; and the Property, Intereſt, and Liberty of the Cities of *London*, *Briſtol*, *Edinburgh*, &c. as well as of *Weſtminſter*. Therefore the Breach of popular Privilege committed by this *L——r* affected the whole Nation; the Parliament underſtood it ſo; the Conſtitution has always underſtood it ſo; and accordingly a Conſtitutional Puniſhment too mild indeed for the Nature of his Crime, but as ſevere as the

Power

Power of the Judges could extend to, was inflicted upon the Offender.——But what happens after?——Says the great Spring of all Offences, " You have been true to " me, tho' you have been a Traitor to your " Country; you are acquitted by me, tho' " you have been cenſur'd by P——t. " Nay, the very Money which was granted " by P——-----t to ſupport the Dignity of " this Government, I will apply as a Re- " ward for an Attempt to ſubvert the Li- " berties of P——-----ts themſelves.

I may challenge any Man of Senſe to put any other Conſtruction than this upon the 1500 *l.* paid to this Fellow. This is the natural, the plain Language which that Fact expreſs'd; and I may venture to appeal to all Experience, and to all Knowledge of human Nature, whether any Returning Officer with a *bad Heart* would ever boggle at any dirty Job were he to have 1500 *l.* to indemnify him.

This Remuneration therefore was a Strain of Power, even beyond the inſolent Claim itſelf of *diſpenſing with Laws*. For in this Caſe the Law had determin'd; this Determination was ſtrengthen'd by a poſitive Declaration of one Branch of the Legiſlature itſelf, who juſtly thought the Offence was levell'd againſt its own Exiſtence; and this Declaration was actually carried into Execution. The Parliament of *Britain* therefore,

ſore, in this Inſtance, might have made the ſame melancholy Reflection with the Tree in the Fable, upon its being cleft into Pieces by a Wedge of its own Timber. Here is the Money granted by Parliament, applied as a Reward for an Attempt to deſtroy Parliaments. So that upon the Whole, this Fact was not only in ſome Meaſure the Exerciſe of a Power which *diſpens'd with*, but *revers'd* LAW.

If the above, as it muſt be allow'd to be, is a fair and an impartial State of the Caſe of the 1500 *l.* paid to *L——r*, can any Man who has a Voice in an Election anſwer for it to Poſterity, if he does not his utmoſt to procure an exemplary Redreſs for this unparallell'd Violation of national Liberty. To ſay, that the Affair is over, would be childiſh and trifling; for tho' the Commiſſion of it is paſt, yet the Influence of the Example will continue to lateſt Ages, and may, under the next corrupted and corrupting Miniſtry, be fatal. Nothing can purge this baneful Influence away but the Puniſhment of the Example, and I am afraid, from ſome late Tranſactions and Occurrences, that there is but little Proſpect of obtaining that Satisfaction any otherwiſe, than by the Voice of the Nation calling out ſtrongly and inſtantly for Reparation for this Permanent Violation of their Rights.

One of the beſt Judges of civil Polity, has ſaid long ago; *Ea ſunt animadvertenda Peccata maxime quæ difficillime precaventur.* The Puniſhment of an Abuſe, ought always be proportion'd to the Difficulty of preventing it; and it muſt be own'd, that the Laws as they now ſtand, have render'd it extreamly *difficult*, if not *impoſſible* to prevent the Abuſe of Power in a Returning Officer; ſo that upon the Detection of ſuch an Offender, the whole Nation, and the Conſtitution itſelf becomes Plaintiff to convict and puniſh him.

But in the preſent Caſe, a more important Object of national Reſentment offers; even the Man for whoſe Service this, and all other publick Offences were committed; the Man who may be *convicted* with *Eaſe*, provided he is *proſecuted* with *Spirit*. But if any Meaſures for this Purpoſe ſhould not be carried on with all the Weight and Force of a national Application, it will give the late, and all future M——rs *Subject* of *Triumph*; nay, perhaps furniſh them with a *Handle* for *Revenge*. As to the Inhabitants of *Weſtminſter*, it is out of all Doubt, that they have a natural Right to apply for Satisfaction; becauſe the Redreſs which the Parliament meant to give them was eluded by the Practices of *one Man*, by there being no ſuch *Puniſhment inflicted upon the Offender, as either the Nature of his Offence,*

*or*

*or the Danger of the Example demands*; which the Intention of the Parliament plainly pointed out. But there is not a Borough or Corporation in the Kingdom, who is not immediately intereſted in the Fate of this Application; becauſe if it ſhould be fruitleſs, there is then an End to all Hopes of ſeeing the Freedom of Elections ſet beyond the Danger of being violated with Impunity; and nothing more in after Times will be needful for deſtroying all the Rights of the People, than an audacious Miniſter ſerv'd by obſequious Tools. As it appears from publick Papers, that the Inhabitants of *Weſtminſter* have taken ſome previous Steps for conducting this Application, I ſhall not pretend to point out any particular Method proper for them to proceed in; but I would only ſubmit it to the Publick, whether it would not be giving the ſtrongeſt, and perhaps the finiſhing Blow to the Cauſe of Corruption and all its Friends either ſecret or avow'd, if the other great Bodies in the Kingdom ſhould join in the ſame Application, ſo as that it may come before Parliament, ſupported by that Intereſt, and back'd by thoſe Numbers which ſo important a Queſtion demands. As I underſtand that ſome very conſiderable Advances that Way have been already made, I cannot deſpair of ſeeing a happy Iſſue to this Application, to whatever Power it may be made, or in whatever

Manner it is carried on. I dare ſay, both will be done with as much Prudence as Spirit; ſince the ſolemn Reſolutions of Parliament have repeatedly declared the Right of all Subjects to petition for Redreſs, either of Abuſes or Grievances, and while ſuch Reſolutions ſtand upon the Journals of Parliament, there can ſcarcely be any Danger of exceeding the Bounds of that Duty which you owe to ſuperiour Powers, by carrying on this Application with Diligence and Zeal.

If you proceed in that Manner, your Proceedings may be attended with ſuch Succeſs as that the whole Myſtery of Iniquity may be clear'd up, and the ſecret Abettors as well as the profeſs'd Friends of Corruption may be brought to Publick Cenſure and Publick Shame. Every bad Action is generally connected with another; and it often happens that great Diſcoveries in Roguery have been made by Accomplices in it, when they were threatned with Puniſhment, meerly upon the Hopes that either their turning Evidence would ſave themſelves, or that the *Intereſt* of their Accomplices would find a Way, at leaſt, to mitigate their Puniſhment.

But in any Event, your attempting to come at the Bottom of this dark Scene muſt be attended with the beſt Conſequences; for even ſuppoſing you ſhould fail in your

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Application, yet the very Attempt will in ſome Meaſure ſave a Preſcription of your Rights to apply to the higher Powers, when you conceive any notorious Violation of your Rights is offer'd. It will thereby be an Awe over the Heads of thoſe who hope to lull you aſleep, and perſuade you to leave your moſt important Concerns entirely to their Management.

I know that it has been induſtriouſly given out, that the Juſtice of Parliament is not to be directed by the Voice of the People; and that, if the Parliament ſhould find it proper, they will proceed in this and all other Matters with due Zeal and Vigour. But to this I anſwer: That I am as ſenſible, and would be as jealous as any Member of that Body of that juſt Independency which they ought both collectively and perſonally to enjoy, after they take their Seats. I am far from thinking that the People have a Right to dictate to them, or that the Conſtitution has veſted the People with any poſitive Powers, to oblige the Parliament to be of their Opinion. But then, on the other Hand, there is a wide Difference between *Repreſenting* and *Dictating*: The People of *England*, in their collective Capacity, have always *maintain'd*, and I hope will, as often as they ſee Occaſion, *exerciſe*, a Power to *repreſent* their Grievances to Parliament, and petition to have them redreſs'd.

This is an *Exerciſe* of Liberty, that has always *preſerv'd* and ſometimes *ſav'd* them from Slavery. It is a Right which has, on the Part of Power under all Governments in *England*, been as induſtriouſly *miſ-repreſented*, as on the Part of Liberty it has been tenaciouſly *aſſerted*; and it is a Right which no Man who acts, or ſpeaks, or thinks upon Conſtitutional Principles, that is, upon thoſe Principles by which his preſent Majeſty holds his Crown, will ever pretend has been abus'd by the People.

In the Reign of *Charles* the Second, a Reign in which the Parliament puniſh'd what would be now thought a paultry Miſapplication of Publick Money, with their higheſt Cenſures, the Right of Petitioning was repreſented in Parliament, by all the Creatures and Scriblers about Court, as *dangerous*, *mutinous*, *innovating*, nay *rebellious*. Proclamations were iſſued out to diſcourage it, *Abhorrences* were ſet on Foot to deter the Petitioners, and the whole *Array of Law* was diſplay'd againſt *the Equitable Exerciſe* of Liberty. But what did the Houſe of Commons do? Why, they paſs'd a Vote *Nemine Contradicente*,

" That it is, and ever hath been, the " undoubted Right of the Subjects of *Eng-* " *land*, to petition the King for the Calling " and Sitting of Parliaments, and *for the* " *Redreſs of Grievances*.

" That

" That, to traduce ſuch Petitioning as " a Violation of Duty, and to repreſent it " to his Majeſty as tumultuous and ſeditious, is to betray the Liberty of the Subject, and contribute to the Deſign of ſubverting the Ancient Legal Conſtitutions of " this Kingdom, and introducing Arbitrary " Power.

" Order'd, that a Committee be appointed, to enquire of all ſuch Perſons as " have offended againſt theſe Rights of the " Subjects. "

Here we ſee, even before the Revolution and the Bill of Rights had explain'd the Nature of this Conſtitution in Favour of Publick Liberty, that the Right of Petitioning the higheſt Powers in the collective Body of the People, was aſſerted by the Commons of *Great Britain*, perhaps even in Contradiction to ſome poſitive Acts that had either been wreſted or ſtolen from them before, by the Arts of the Crown. The Principles of natural Equity are not to be deſtroy'd by *Power*, nay not by *Conceſſion*. Such a *Conceſſion*, were any ſuch made, would bind, not to *Performance*, but to *Repentance*. We may have our Properties from our Parents, but our Liberties come from God; —— and no Man, nor Body of Men, can intercept them, or bargain them away. The juſt Circulation of Power thro' all of the different Channels of Government

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is eſſential to the Preſervation of Liberty, nay it cannot ſubſiſt without proper Bounds; but then all this Diſtribution of Power, all this Limitation of Privilege was never to *cramp*, far leſs to *wound*, but to *regulate* the *Rights of Nature*. It is in this Regulation that Liberty it ſelf conſiſts; for without *Regulation* there can be no *Right*.

Having gone thus far, Gentlemen, (and I have gone as far as the ſtrongeſt Advocate for Government, if he underſtands what he would be at, can go) I ſhall on the other Hand beg Leave to ſubmit a few Things to your Conſideration, as *Engliſhmen* and Fellow-Subjects, which naturally ariſe from what I have before laid down.

The Principles upon which your Rights are founded are plain, few, obvious, and intelligible; the Facts to which thoſe Principles are applicable may be *perceiv'd* by every Man who has *Underſtanding*; nay, they may be *felt* by every Man who has *Feeling*; ſo that it is impoſſible that you ſhould ever forget your true Intereſt, which is the Preſervation of your Rights; nor is there any one Inſtance of either you or your Anceſtors, thro' all the Revolutions of their Government, ever once miſtaking them.

Would any Man of Common Senſe, let him have ever ſo little Knowledge of Navigation or Sailing, ſuffer, with his Eyes open, a Pilot, who is directing a Veſſel, entruſted by

by him to his Management, and charg'd with his own Life and Fortune, to run full Sail upon a Rock, while he ought to be ſteering in the Harbour? Were any of you the Owner of the Ship, would you not expoſtulate with him? nay, if he continued obſtinate, would you not throw him over Board, and commit the Helm to other Hands? Suppoſing again that this Pilot ſhould tell you: *Sir, you made me Maſter of this Veſſel, and I will ſteer it as I think fit.* Or, *Sir, pardon me, I am ſteering very right; but your Want of Skill makes you think it wrong, and my own Life is at Stake as well as yours.* Might you not naturally tell him, that your Eyes are open, that you have your Senſes about you, and that you don't know, but that he may have the Secret of getting aſhore upon the Wrecks of the Veſſel.

The Spirit of this Nation has diſplac'd many State-Pilots, who have made Uſe of the above Rhetoric, and they never did it but with Reaſon. But the Caſe now in Hand is confin'd to bare Repreſentation, nay to humble Petitioning; you are afraid that the Caſe before you, if unanſwer'd, may be a Precedent for depriving you of your moſt valuable Rights, as Men, or *Engliſhmen*; nay, you are morally certain that it muſt. You are not endeavouring to wreſt the Helm of State out of the Hands of any

Power to which it is entruſted; you are only making uſe of the Evidence of your own Senſes, which convince you that your Liberties muſt be wreckt, if Care is not taken to avoid this Shelve. This is a Privilege which you have a Right to uſe; it is a Privilege, which is more conſiſtent with the Nature of this Conſtitution, than the Right of *inſtructing* Members who, without Doubt, after they are choſen, are independent of their Conſtituents, as to their Conduct in Parliament. To conclude, it is a Privilege which has been often pleaded for by thoſe who ſucceeded the late Miniſter; and you need no other Arguments to juſtify your Application, than their conſtant *Tenor of Conduct*, and the *Strain of their Speeches*, during the whole Period of their *Oppoſition*.

I muſt now beg Leave to put you in Mind, Gentlemen, that the preſent is a very dangerous Juncture for you; I am not at Liberty, perhaps it would be improper, to ſpecify for what Reaſons, I will only mention one; which is, that in no Period of Time it was ever known, that ſo many Reaſons for *Oppoſition did exiſt*, and yet there is now Danger that all *Oppoſition will ceaſe*. The Heads of thoſe who form'd the late Oppoſition, are in a great Meaſure gone over to that Cauſe which they *oppos'd*; they who remain, tho' perhaps they have all the Inclination

clination in the World to ſerve you, yet whom can they truſt to? They have already been deceiv'd by *thoſe of their own Body*, what Security can they have that they ſhall not be ſo again. You have it now in your Power to give them the beſt Security, that of their Country's Affections; it was your Spirit which has already enabled them to encounter a much ſtronger, and more important Enemy than any they have now to deal with; nay, to baffle his moſt favourite Schemes, even in the Height of his Power, and a vigorous Exertion of the ſame Spirit at this Juncture, will ſet you above the like Danger in Time to come.

I ſhall conclude this Addreſs, Gentlemen, with the ſtrongeſt Motive I had for making it, by obſerving, that ſuch an Application muſt be attended with the very beſt Effects, as to the Security and Eſtabliſhment of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government. His Majeſty himſelf has ſhewn his Diſlike to the late M———r, by depriving him of his *Poſts*, and has thereby taken the moſt proper Method of endearing his Perſon and Government to his People. This Step in his Majeſty ought to be an Encouragement for you to ſecond it, ſince it was a Declaration on the Part of his Majeſty, that he deſir'd no greater Glory than the Happineſs of his People, and had no other Views in his Government, but the Preſervation of that Happineſs,

pineſs, together with that of your Rights and Privileges, which muſt apparently be ruin'd, ſhould this Violation of them paſs uncenſur'd and unpuniſh'd. I am,

*Gentlemen,*

Your Fellow Subject and Servant.

*F I N I S.*

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